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Promotion and protection of human rights: celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Report of the Third Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-second session, under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights", the sub-item entitled "Celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee held a general discussion on the sub-item jointly with sub-items 70 (a) and (d) at its 20th and 21st meetings, on 23 October 2007, and took action on sub-item (f) at its 29th and 42nd meetings, on 29 October and 9 November. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/62/SR.20, 21, 29 and 42).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.3/62/L.28 and Rev.1

3. At the 29th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Benin, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States and Argentina, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Year of Human Rights Learning" (A/C.3/62/L.28), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Recalling* that the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations include encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in seven parts, under the symbol A/62/439 and Add.1-6.

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"*Reaffirming* the central importance of human rights education in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,

"*Recalling* its resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, in which it decided that the Human Rights Council should promote human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building,

"*Recalling also* the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in which Heads of State and Government expressed their support for the promotion of human rights education and learning at all levels, including through the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, as appropriate, and encouraged all States to develop initiatives in that regard,

"*Acknowledging* that non-governmental organizations play an important role at the national, regional and international levels in the promotion and protection of human rights through education and learning,

"*Considering* that the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008 is a suitable occasion to redouble the Organization's efforts to promote a human rights culture worldwide through education and learning,

"*Welcoming* the adoption by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2007 of a resolution entitled 'United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training',

"*Convinced* that every woman, man and child, in order to realize their full human potential, must be made aware of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

"*Convinced* that human rights learning should serve to transform the holistic vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a way of life for people everywhere and a standard to measure the legitimacy of Governments,

"1. *Decides* that the year commencing on 10 December 2007 shall be proclaimed the International Year of Human Rights Learning, devoted to activities to broaden and deepen human rights learning as a way of life, on the basis of the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development;

"2. *Also decides* that the Human Rights Council shall promote the effective coordination and creative development of human rights learning among Member States and within the United Nations system;

"3. *Calls upon* Member States to cooperate among themselves to promote human rights learning and to undertake throughout the year and beyond, at local, national and international levels, activities aimed at ensuring the universal knowledge and implementation of human rights;

"4. *Invites* the Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop, in cooperation with civil society organizations and appropriate United Nations agencies and programmes, suitable activities to promote human rights learning at all levels of society;

"5. *Decides* to devote a high-level segment at its sixty-third session to reviewing activities of Member States and civil society aimed at human rights learning in the context of the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

4. At its 42nd meeting, on 9 November, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.3/62/L.28/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.28 and Austria, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Slovenia and Thailand, subsequently joined by Armenia, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname and Turkey.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee was advised that the revised draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

6. Also at the 42nd meeting, the representative of Benin orally revised the draft resolution as follows:

(a) After the fourth preambular paragraph, a new preambular paragraph was inserted reading:

"*Noting* the complementarities between the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the International Year of Human Rights Learning";

(b) Operative paragraph 4, which had read:

"4. *Decides* to devote a commemorative meeting at its sixty-third session to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights";

was replaced by:

"4. *Decides* to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a plenary meeting to be held on 10 December 2008, and encourages the participation of Member States at the highest level possible";

(c) In operative paragraph 5, the words "the end of the year during" were inserted before the words "its sixty-fourth session".

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/62/L.28/Rev.1, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the Third Committee

8. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Year of Human Rights Learning

The General Assembly,

Recalling that the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations include promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

Reaffirming the central importance of human rights education in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[2]

Recalling its resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, in which it decided that the Human Rights Council should, inter alia, promote human rights education and learning as well as advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[3] in which Heads of State and Government expressed their support for the promotion of human rights education and learning at all levels, including through the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, as appropriate, and encouraged all States to develop initiatives in that regard,

Noting the complementarities between the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the International Year of Human Rights Learning,

Acknowledging the important role played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in promoting and coordinating the Education for All programmes,

Welcoming the adoption by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2007 of resolution 6/9, entitled "Development of public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights",[4] resolution 6/10, entitled "United Nations declaration on human rights education and training",[4] and resolution 6/24, entitled "World Programme for Human Rights Education",[4]

Acknowledging that non-governmental organizations play an important role at the national, regional and international levels in the promotion and protection of human rights through education and learning,

Considering that the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008 is a suitable occasion for the United Nations

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, sect. II, paras. 78-82.

[3] See resolution 60/1, para. 131.

[4] See A/HRC/6/L.11, chap. I, sect. A; to final texts of the resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its sixth session will be issued in *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/63/53).

to increase its efforts to promote a human rights culture worldwide through education and learning,

Convinced that every woman, man and child, in order to realize his or her full human potential, must be made aware of all his or her human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced also that human rights learning should contribute to the fulfilment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a way of life for people everywhere,

1. *Decides* that the year commencing on 10 December 2008 shall be proclaimed the International Year of Human Rights Learning, to be devoted to activities undertaken to broaden and deepen human rights learning on the basis of the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependency, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, bearing in mind the duty of the State, regardless of the political, economic and cultural system, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds;

2. *Calls upon* Member States to intensify their efforts, throughout the year and beyond, to promote human rights learning and education at the local, national and international levels, and encourages cooperation at all levels and with all relevant stakeholders to this end;

3. *Invites* the Human Rights Council and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop with Member States, in cooperation with civil society organizations and appropriate specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, activities suitable for promoting human rights learning, as appropriate, at all levels of society;

4. *Decides* to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] in a plenary meeting to be held on 10 December 2008, and encourages the participation of Member States at the highest level possible;

5. *Also decides* to devote a special meeting at the end of the year during its sixty-fourth session to reviewing activities undertaken by Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and civil society during the International Year of Human Rights Learning and further decides to determine the format of the meeting at a later date;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.